

Greetings -

My name is Nate Doty and I am a nearly lifelong resident of Maryland, currently living in the 21218 zip code in Baltimore City. I work for a local nonprofit in a program that works to provide energy efficiency products and education to low to moderate income residents, and work along side a training program that helps returning citizens develop applicable skills for careers in the green energy and green homes fields.

I often interact with residents and trainees who have been through the criminal justice system, and while I have not personally had such experiences, their stories and struggles have helped bring an otherwise abstract understanding of that system into much more clear focus. I strongly believe that for-profit prisons and detention centers do far more to help enrich the owners and operators of such ventures than to rehabilitate and enrich those individuals that are relegated to their halls.

A system that allows for profiting off of detaining individuals puts the business and financial considerations ahead of the human persons that are under the care. The focus becomes more on making money than on rehabilitating individuals and making a positive impact on their lives or on the wider community. Such a system opens the door for dehumanization, commodification, and abuse. The drive to "fill beds" and line pockets by housing convicted individuals is an amazingly capitalist byproduct of a society that seeks to uphold law and order and the almighty dollar over human rights and socially meaningful personal fulfillment. For-profit detention centers employ deployable tactics such as using inmates for cheap labor and neglecting any sort of true rehabilitation that leads to high recidivism to keep a (literally) captive market financially productive. I cannot help but draw a parallel between such businesses and the tobacco industry, or the peddlers or addictive drugs. What better way to ensure your income than to trap your clients in addiction, or in this case, incarceration?

Flatly speaking, there should be no profit when it comes to incarceration. Any surplus funds should be funneled back to the individuals detained at such places, whether that be for improved facilities, better meals and resources, or programs that aim to actually rehabilitate. I imagine that most crime comes of necessity and not malice, so we as a society should aim to reform criminals back into socially and economically productive members of society. Certainly we should not be seeking to maximize profit while doing little to prepare them for "life outside" all but guaranteeing that they will have neither the resources nor the skills to avoid a situation that will lead them back into the system, once again benefiting owners and shareholders in these companies that care more about the dollar than the person.

On top of all of this, I strongly believe that ICE and its contractors have acted deplorably, that the very nature of immigration-related detention facilities is wide open to unethical and racist practices, and that I certainly do not want to invite such practices into my state. Maryland has its share of problems, but I am thankful that, so far, for profit detention centers are not one of them. I would like to see it stay that way.

Thank you,  
Nate Doty

Baltimore Resident  
7th MD Congressional District  
43th MD Legislative District